

## Environmental Health Threats to Elderly Are Top Priority for EPA Administrator

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christie Whitman will be developing a National Agenda on the Environment and the Aging as part of the agency's aging initiative.

EPA will be looking for input from key stakeholders, such as older Americans, aging organizations, public health professionals, health care providers and schools of public health.

After a series of meetings in the spring of 2003, EPA hopes to roll out the agenda in the fall. It will cover indoor and outdoor air pollutants, including radon, secondhand smoke, pesticides and particulate matter.

EPA has previously studied particulate matter and its effects on the elderly, but the aging initiative will allow the agency to coordinate and develop a comprehensive research agenda.

## Volunteer Opportunities Abound

Whitman is encouraging seniors to volunteer in their communities in environmental prevention activities sponsored by organizations such as the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), the Senior Companion Program and area agencies on aging.

For example, RSVP volunteers in Utah are helping with record management at the EPA information repository. Likewise, EPA signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement (EASI) in October to encourage seniors to volunteer in environmental clean-up activities.

Whitman is also looking for input from the Senior Environmental Employment (SEE) Program, which places individuals age 55 and over in work assignments at federal, state and local environmental agencies.

A workshop on the susceptibility of older people to environmental hazards will be held **Dec. 5-6** in Washington.

The meeting is sponsored by EPA, the National Institute on Aging, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health and the Archstone Foundation, and will cover toxicology, epidemiology and genetics as well as clinical practice.

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